



HR0548

LRB095 12546 KXB 37775 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of former
4 State Representative Sylvester O. Rhem of Chicago, who passed
5 away on June 14, 2007; and

6 WHEREAS, Sylvester O'Neal Rhem was born November 19, 1929
7 to his parents, Edward and Martha O'Neal; he attended the
8 Chicago Public Schools, graduating from McCosh Elementary
9 School and Englewood High School, then attending Wilson Junior
10 College; he later attended Loop Jr. College, completing the
11 Public Service Program for Chicago Executive Development, and
12 DePaul University for his Bachelors degree in Public
13 Administration; and

14 WHEREAS, Sylvester Rhem was a member of the Chicago Police
15 Department and was selected to serve on the elite Flying Squad;
16 he distinguished himself as an officer and detective and earned
17 53 Honorable Mentions while working with the department; in
18 February of 1965 he went on leave from the police department
19 when he was selected for a leadership position with the newly
20 formed Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity, the Chicago arm
21 of the War on Poverty; and

22 WHEREAS, His hands-on leadership moved people to positive

1 action and was one of Sylvester's greatest strengths; he served
2 in several top positions in many communities including:
3 Assistant Director at South Parkway, Douglas Park, and King
4 Urban Progress Center, as Director of Englewood, Lawndale, and
5 Near North Urban Progress Centers, as Area Manager of Lawndale,
6 West Garfield, North Avenue, and Cabrini-Green Units, and the
7 Garfield Service Center; in each community he was recognized
8 for outstanding leadership and community service, receiving
9 awards and citations, including being honored by the Illinois
10 National Guard during the Chicago Riot following the
11 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King ; and

12 WHEREAS, Sylvester Rhem also served at Central
13 Headquarters in several capacities, including: Assistant to
14 the Director of Field Operations of Model Cities/CCUO and as
15 Assistant Executive Director of Programs, coordinating the
16 Mayor's Summer Baseball Program in 1976; he was also Assistant
17 Director of Personnel for the Department of Human Services; in
18 1984 he received the Distinguished Community Service Award by
19 the Concerned Black Executives of Social Service Organizations
20 for all his hard work in the community; and

21 WHEREAS, Sylvester Rhem volunteered as a precinct captain
22 in the 6th Ward and headed up the Volunteer Work Force in the
23 3rd Ward for Tyrone T. Kenner; in 1980 he was appointed State
24 Representative of the 26th District and served on several

1 committees and commissions during the 82nd General Assembly; he
2 was reelected and served as State Representative for the 24th
3 District; he was honored as one of the pioneers in the struggle
4 by the History Makers and given a Distinguished Service award;
5 he was instrumental in the passage of the Highway Funding Act
6 and received awards from the Illinois Road Builders Association
7 and General Contractors for Support and Leadership; and

8 WHEREAS, In retirement, Sylvester dedicated himself to
9 working with his church, St. Columbanus, and served as
10 president of the Usher Board, redesigning their operations; he
11 was a committed worker, leader, and builder of the Knights of
12 Peter Claver Council for St. Columbanus when the Council
13 received the Council of the Year Award for 2000; he was awarded
14 Grand Knight of the Year for the Northern State District for
15 2000; he received the St. Felicita's/St. Ailbe's
16 African-American Image Award for Academic Excellence,
17 Leadership, Christian Values, and Dedication to the Community
18 and Community Service in 2002; On May 18, 2007 Sylvester was
19 given the Sir Knight Sylvester Rhem presentation; and

20 WHEREAS, Sylvester Rhem was preceded in death by his
21 mother, brother, Launy, and sister, Lois; and

22 WHEREAS, Sylvester Rhem leaves to celebrate his life and
23 mourn his death his son, Michael Christopher Rhem; his adopted

1 daughter, Stephanie Inis; his grandchildren, Tonia Duke,
2 Leshun Duke, Wendy Bumphis, and Kayla Riley; his
3 great-grandchildren; his special friend, Brenda Inis; a host of
4 nieces and nephews; his lifelong friends, John Jarrett, John
5 Ford, Leann Hagan (Bobby Trap), and Tyrone Kenner; as well as
6 many other special friends; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
8 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
9 mourn, along with his family and friends, the passing of former
10 State Representative Sylvester O. Rhem; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to the family of Sylvester O. Rhem as a symbol of our
13 sympathy.